Take a swim at any of our recreation center swimming pools. We offer quality programs and activities for you to enjoy, including lap swimming, exercising, diving & fun special events. And, we welcome people of all ages & abilities. A Virginia Beach Recreation Center membership or day pass is required for all classes and activities.
Preschool Swimming Lessons

A few reminders:

• It is important to remember that preschool classes will not make children water safe.
• Parents who take children of the opposite sex under age 6 in the locker room are requested to respect the privacy of other patrons. Parents are encouraged to use assisted-care changing areas or handicapped bathrooms to attend to the needs of young children.
• Swim lessons will still be held during inclement weather; we have classroom activities during thunderstorms.

Tiny Bobbers with Adult Guardian
Age 1-2 with adult
A safe and fun introduction to the water for youth ages 1-2 to share with a participating adult guardian. The purpose of the course is to familiarize children with the water and teach swimming readiness skills. In addition, the course provides safety information for parents and teaches parents techniques they can use to help orient their children to the water. Water safety topics for the pool, home, beach and waterpark are also included. Note: This class is not intended to make children water safe.

Paddler 1
Age 3
Prerequisite: Children must be 3 by the first day of class, toilet trained, able to communicate needs and willing to separate from parent/guardian. Student to instructor ratio of 5:1.

Preschool Aquatics Level 1: Introduces basic aquatic skills, which children continue to build as they progress through Levels 2 and 3 of Preschool Aquatics and then Learn to Swim. Children start developing attitudes and safe practices around the water. Many skills are performed with assistance from the instructor.

Preschool Aquatics Level 2: Further development of basic aquatic skills continues. Children begin to perform skills at a slightly more advanced level by practicing skills for a longer period of time or longer distances. This also marks the beginning of independent skills.

Preschool Aquatics Level 3: Additional guided practices help increase child's proficiency in performing previously learned skills by increasing repetitions, distances, times or levels of refinement. Skills are performed independently. At conclusion of Preschool Aquatics Level 3, most children are ready for Learn to Swim Level 2.

Paddler 2
Ages 4-5
Prerequisite: Children must be 4 by the first day of class, toilet trained, able to communicate needs and willing to separate from parent/guardian. Student to instructor ratio of 6:1.

Preschool Aquatics Levels 1-3: Descriptions listed above in Paddler 1.

American Red Cross Learn to Swim Classes

Age 5-15
This swimming and water safety program teaches people of different ages and abilities how to be safe in, on or around the water. The program emphasizes water safety and skill development with an inclusive approach and covers the knowledge and skills needed for aquatic skill development.

Program highlights include:

• Thoroughly updated and revised program materials to reflect the latest science, including: Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) statements and advisories on many topics, including the Circle of Drowning Prevention and Chain of Drowning Survival, water competency, safe aquatic outings, water temperature and others.
• Realignment of progressions in the Learn to Swim courses to correlate with the definition of water competency as established by Scientific Advisory Council (SAC).
• Updated biomechanics for swim strokes and starts.
• Additional information and inclusion strategies.
• Progress Report for every participant.
• ARC Achievement Cards upon the completion of each level.

A few reminders:

• Parents may want to confirm what level your child is in at the end of the first class.
• Parents are encouraged to discuss your child's progress with the instructor before or after class.
• It is highly recommended that you bring your child to the pool to practice whenever possible.
Which Learn to Swim Class is my child ready for?

Can my child:
- Enter the water independently, travel at least 5 yards, bob 5 times, then safely exit the water? (Child can walk, move along the gutter or "swim.")
- Glide on front for 2 body lengths, roll to a back float for 5 seconds and recover to a vertical position? (May be performed with help.)
- Then your child is ready for Level 1

Can my child:
- Step from side into chest-deep water, push off the bottom, tread or float for 15 seconds, swim on front and/or back for 5 body lengths, then exit?
- Back float for 15 seconds, roll to front, and then recover to vertical?
- Push off, swim on front for 5 body lengths, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to the front, then swim 5 body lengths?
- Then your child is ready for Level 2

Can my child:
- Jump into deep water, recover to the surface, tread or float for 1 minute, then level off, swim front crawl and/or elementary backstroke for 25 yards, and exit the water?
- Push off, swim front crawl for 15 yards, then swim elementary backstroke 15 yards and exit the water?
- Then your child is ready for Level 3

Can my child:
- Enter deep water feet first, swim front crawl for 25 yards, then swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards?
- Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, then swim back crawl for 15 yards?
- Swim 3 to 5 body lengths underwater without hyperventilating and exit?
- Then your child is ready for Level 4

Can my child:
- Perform a shallow-angle dive into deep water, swim front crawl 50 yards, then swim elementary backstroke 50 yards with proper turns?
- Swim breaststroke 25 yards, then swim back crawl for 25 yards using proper turns?
- Then your child is ready for Level 5

Can my child:
- Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke? Swim 12 minutes continuously?
- Then your child is ready for Level 6

American Red Cross Learn to Swim Class Skills

Level 1: Introduction to Water Skills
Introduction to basic skills as the foundation for future skills and water competency development
- Enter and exit water independently using the ramp, steps or side
- Travel at least 5 yards, bobbing 5 times and then safely exit the water
- Open eyes underwater and retrieve submerged object
- Glide on front for at least, 2 body lengths
- Roll to a back float for 5 seconds and recover to a vertical position
- Combine arm and leg action on front and back
- Alternating and simultaneous arm and leg actions on front and back
- Use a life jacket

Level 2: Fundamental Aquatic Skills
Builds on current skills and works toward gaining rudimentary propulsive skills on both front and back
- Enter and exit water independently using the ramp, steps or side
- Step from the side into chest-deep water
- Fully submerge and hold breath, 10 seconds
- Bobbing, 10 times (in chest -deep water)
- Rotary breathing, 5 times
- Open eyes underwater and retrieve a submerged object, 3 times (in chest -deep water)
- Float on front 10 seconds and back 15 seconds.
- Front and back glides, 2 body lengths
- Change direction of travel swimming on front or back
- Roll over from front to back, back to front
- Tread water using arm and leg actions, 15 seconds
- Swim on front and back using combined arm and leg actions
- Combined arm and leg actions on front and back, 5 body lengths

Level 3: Stroke Development
Builds Level 2 skills through additional guided practice.
- Enter water by jumping from the side, fully submerge, then recover to the surface and return to the side
- Headfirst entry from the side in a sitting and kneeling position
- Bobbing while moving toward safety, 15 times
- Rotary breathing, 15 times
- Survival float, 30 seconds
- Back float, 1 minute
- Float on front and back
- Change from vertical to horizontal position on front and back
- Tread water, 1 minute
- Front crawl, 15 yards
- Push off in a streamlined position on front and begin flutter kicking, 3 to 5 body lengths
- Push off in a streamline on front position and begin dolphin kicking, 3 to 5 body lengths
- Breaststroke kick, 15 yards
- Elementary backstroke, 15 yards
- Scissors kick, 15 yards

Level 4: Stroke Improvement
Develops confidence in the skills learned and improves other aquatic skills.
- Headfirst entry from side - compact and stride position
- Swim underwater 3 to 5 body lengths
- Feet first surface dive, submerging completely
- Survival swimming, 1 minute (in deep water)
- Open turns on front and back
- Tread water using 2 different kicks, 2 minutes
- Front crawl 25 yards
- Breaststroke, 15 yards
- Butterfly, 15 yards
• Push off in a streamline position on back and begin flutter kicking, 3 to 5 body lengths
• Push off in a streamline position on back and begin dolphin kicking, 3 to 5 body lengths
• Elementary backstroke, 25 yards
• Back crawl, 15 yards
• Sidestroke, 15 yards

Level 5: Stroke Refinement
Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes.
• Shallow angle dive from the side
• Shallow angle dive, glide 2 to 3 body lengths and begin any front stroke
• Tuck surface dive
• Pike surface dive
• Front flip turn while swimming
• Backstroke flip turn while swimming
• Tread water, 5 minutes
• Tread water, using legs only, 2 minutes
• Front crawl, 50 yards
• Breaststroke 25 yard

Level 6: Fitness Swimmer
Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes.
• Using equipment: pull buoys, fins, paddles, pace clock
• Cooper Swim Test (12-minute swim)
• Strokes: front crawl, elementary backstroke, back crawl, breaststroke, butterfly, sidestroke including turns for each of the strokes
• Setting up an exercise program
• Calculating target heart rate

Specialty Classes & Clinics
Clinics Ages 6 – 18 depending on program
Clinics are offered throughout the year for backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle, springboard diving, swim league prep and water polo.

Prerequisites:
• Stroke Clinics: Swimmers must be able to swim one length of the pool using a good basic crawl stroke with rhythmic breaths. Swimmers must also be familiar with the stroke taught.
• Springboard Diving: Divers must be deep water safe and able to dive head first off the diving board.
• Water Polo: Participants must be comfortable swimming in deep water.

Private Lessons Age 3 & up
Learn or refine your swimming skills with individualized, one-on-one instruction. Lessons are offered in 30-minute increments. Private specialty lessons also available (Lifeguard training prep, triathlon prep, etc.)

Introduction to Water Polo Age 7 -10
With an emphasis on player development and fun, this intro is designed for youth with little polo experience. We expose the players to basic polo skills and a team environment.

Competitive Youth Leagues

Introduction to Dive League Age 7-17
With an emphasis on diver development and fun, this intro is designed for youth with no competitive diving experience. We will expose divers to basic competitive diving skills and a team environment. Participants must be deep water safe and able to go head first off the diving board.

Dive League Age 7-17
Emphasis is placed on diver development and fun in a low-key competitive environment. Participants will compete in age groups based on their age on the first day of practice. Season runs March - May. Registration begins in December.

Eligibility: Participants must
• Be deep water safe
• Perform front dive with approach and hurdle
• Front somersault
• Back dive with back take off

Water Polo Age 10-17
Tired of swimming laps and want a different way to challenge your swimming skills? Want to learn how to play water polo or build upon your current polo skills? Water Polo League places emphasis on learning correct techniques and rules in a fun, low-key competitive environment. Season runs March - May. Registration begins in December.

Eligibility swim:
• Swim 50 meters/yards using front crawl, with head above water
• Tread water for 5 minutes

Winter Swim League Age 6-17
Eligibility Swim: Swimmers must be registered in swim league prior to the eligibility swim and can attend either eligibility swim dates for their site. Season runs November - February. Registration begins in August.

Swimmers (10 yrs & under):
• Must be able to swim 25 meters/yards using a good front crawl with face in water demonstrating rhythmic breathing
Swimmers also must be able to swim 25 meters/yards back crawl

Swimmers (11 yrs & up):
- Must be able to swim 50 meters/yards using a good front crawl with face in water demonstrating rhythmic breathing (either to side or forward)
- Swimmers also must be able to swim 50 meters/yards back crawl

Preseason Conditioning  Age 6 - 18
Get ready for your swim season. We offer conditioning classes for both high school and summer league. Emphasis is placed on proper stroke technique for all the competitive strokes, starts and turn.
Prerequisite: Swimmers must be able to complete minimum requirements. See online description for more information.

Advanced Water Safety Classes Age 6 - 18

Lifeguard Training Age 15 & up
Designed to teach swimming pool lifeguarding skills and knowledge needed to prevent and respond to aquatic emergencies.

Prerequisites:
- Proof of age
- Pass the Eligibility swim test:
  - Swim 300 yards
  - Swim 20 yards, surface dive, retrieve a 10 lb object and carry back to wall in less than 1 min. 40 sec.
  - Tread water for 2 minutes using legs only

Requirements for certification:
- Attend all class sessions
- Pass written exam
- Pass all water, CPR, First Aid and AED skills and tests

Lifeguard Training Instructor Age 17 & up
Trains instructor candidates to teach American Red Cross Lifeguard training, CPR/PR, First Aid, AED, Bloodborne Pathogens, and Water Safety courses.

Prerequisites:
- 16 years of age or older
- Possess current base level certification in First Aid, CPR, AED
- Pass pre-course, which includes, lifeguarding, swimming, First Aid, CPR, and AED skills
- Successfully complete online introduction to course after passing eligibility

Certification requirements:
- Successfully complete the required number of practice teaching assignments
- Score at least 80% on final exam

Water Safety Instructor (WSI) Age 16 & up
Trains students to teach American Red Cross level swim classes. Students should be able to perform the following swimming skills taught at Level 4: crawl, breast, side, elementary back, and butterfly. Text material required after meeting eligibility

Prerequisites: Pass a water skills test.

Requirements for certification:
- Attend all class sessions
- Pass all practice teaching sessions
- Pass a water skills test
- Pass a written exam

Blended Learning Now Available!
Check out our Blended learning offerings. Blended learning combines online knowledge acquisition and in-person skill assessment in and out of the water. Blended learning is available for the following classes: Lifeguard Training and Water Safety Instructor.
FAQ’s about swim lessons

How can you help?
• Have your child ask the instructor which skills they should review, and then make it possible for your child to practice these skills at home or at local aquatic facility.
• Praise your child and help them be proud of the efforts and accomplishments toward being a safety-conscious and skilled swimmer.
• Understand that children develop swimming skills at different rates. Avoid putting pressure on achievement; encourage your child to enjoy swim lessons and take pride in personal successes.
• Remember, not completing a level the first time, or even the second time, means that there are important skills that need to be improved upon and strengthened.

How can you build on your child’s swimming experience?
• Give your child plenty of opportunity to develop strength, practice skills and increase their comfort level in the water by taking them to a local aquatic facility.
• Encourage your child, when at play, to try the skills they are learning in lessons.
• Stay interested in your child’s progress. Ask your child to show you a skill learned in swim lessons and incorporate the skill into a game to play in the pool.

How do you evaluate the skills that my child should complete in their level to move to the next level?
• All of our instructors are certified American Red Cross Water Safety Instructors. During their training they are taught how to evaluate every skill for each level.
• Each level has certain skills that are evaluated and as the levels progress the refinement of the skill will continue to advance.
• All students achieve mastery of a skill at different times, which could be due to coordination, age or length of time devoted to practicing that skill.
• We do not emphasize that a child passes or fails. We focus on the mastery of the skills that are required to complete a level.
• We encourage parents to review the listing of all the skills that are required for each level.

What should I do if my child is ill and cannot come to class?
• If you know that your child will be unable to attend lessons one week prior to the session starting, please notify the Aquatics office. We will attempt to find another class at a later date or possibly be able to refund your fee.
• Please do not bring your child to lessons if they are ill. For the safety of the other children in lessons and also for the well-being of your child, keep them at home. Please notify us if your child will be absent but understand that we cannot conduct a make-up class.
• Check in with instructors if you’ve missed a class to make sure your child has not missed any major skill components.
• We do not have the ability to do make-up lessons due to the absence of your child, but we do offer private lessons for an additional fee.

What’s after Level 6?
• Take a Junior Instructor or Junior Lifeguard class. After completion, students may begin volunteering.

What can I work on with my child if they are not old enough for Learn to Swim programs?
• We recommend trying the Tiny Bobbers for age 1-2, Paddler 1 for 3 year olds and Paddler 2 for children ages 4-5.

FIND FULL PROGRAM DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS ONLINE AT VBGOV.COM/PARKS